

Children in CD custody often come with few belongings but will accumulate items during their stay in care. These items should go with the child from placement to placement. However, there are times when the foster child leaves belongings behind (i.e. in an emergency move or residential placement). In these instances, the items will often come to the local office for storage. The following are guidelines on the return, maintenance, and/or removal of these belongings.

1. **Return of Belongings** – When a child returns home or to a placement in which they may have their belongings (i.e. to a foster home from residential), the items should be returned to the child. A notification letter should be sent to or contact made with the child or family to make arrangements to transfer the belongings to the child/family. If the placement is not in the county or circuit where the belongings are kept (or arrangements can not be made to return the belongings), the items will be mailed to the child. The cost of mailing the belongings will come out of the county budget. This protocol should also be followed if a child ages out of the system and an address is known for the child.
2. **Maintenance/Donation/Destruction of Belongings** – Any important legal documents or paper (i.e. birth certificate, medical papers, etc.) should be kept in the child's case record in a separate section or envelope. Toys and clothing should be inspected for usability and safety. If they are useable and safe, toys and clothing may be donated to local charities, foster parent associations, or local resources; utilized in local office visiting rooms, or kept as a resource for foster parents and emergency placements. Those items deemed not usable or unsafe should be placed in the trash for disposal. Any concern with normal disposal of items should be addressed by the local office management with a plan for disposal developed. Any items which do not fall under the categories of legal papers, toys or clothing should be kept, donated or destroyed at the discretion of the local management staff. Any question as to what to do with a particular item can be directed to Regional Office staff.

**Timeframes** – All belongings may be donated or destroyed, as outlined, if Division staff is unable to make contact with the child or family within 6 months of the child leaving custody.

MEMORANDA HISTORY: [CD06-55](#)